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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: TRAINING BY USG EXPERTS BRINGS TO LIFE PROMISE OF
COOPERATION IN AREA OF WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

REF: 2006 BRASILIA 2286

¶1. (U) THIS CABLE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED AND NOT FOR
INTERNET DISTRIBUTION.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY. Seminars put on in mid-October by U.S. water resource management experts have served to implement recommendations developed by the bilateral water technical working group created under the Common Agenda for the Environment (CAE). On October 9-12, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer (USACE) Research Hydraulic Engineer Cary Talbot led a well-received seminar in Brasilia on advance techniques in modeling of water resources with Brazilian counterparts; while in Rio de Janeiro October 15-19, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) hydrologist Arthur Horowitz presented a seminar on water quality and sediment monitoring to state and local authorities. The Brazilian technical experts were very receptive and sought additional technical cooperation. Particularly noteworthy is that the Ministry of Exterior Relations (MRE), which oversees the CAE process for Brazil, was briefed about and pleased with this technical cooperation, even going so far as to send officials to attend the all-day Brasilia seminar. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (SBU) The USG and the Government of Brazil (GOB) decided at the December 13, 2006 Common Agenda for the Environment (CAE) meeting (REFTEL) to establish working groups to advance technical cooperation. A water technical working group was created and at a July 2007 digital video conference USG and GOB technical experts identified priority areas of interest for possible cooperation. Based on those priorities, the State Department located and funded two USG technical experts to go to Brazil and provide training for Brazilian counterparts on water resource management. Beforehand, the Embassy's Environment, Science, Technology and Health (ESTH) Counselor and ESTH Officer briefed the Ministry of Exterior Relations' (MRE) Chief of the Division on the Environment Counselor Fernando Coimbra and his staff about the upcoming visits and invited their support and participation. Coimbra appreciated the technical assistance and the advance notice. He sent two of his officers - Pedro Cabral de Andrade and Maite de Souza Schmitz- to attend the seminar in Brasilia, who indicated to ESTH Officer that they were pleased with the technical assistance provided.

USACE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

¶4. (SBU) At the July digital video conference, the GOB identified groundwater modeling as a priority area for possible technical

cooperation. Accordingly, OES arranged for U.S. Army Corps of Engineer (USACE) Research Hydraulic Engineer Cary Talbot to go to Brasilia, October 9-12. A highlight of Talbot's trip was the October 10 technical level groundwater modeling seminar hosted by Brazil's national water authority (ANA - Agencia Nacional das Aguas) where Talbot demonstrated computer groundwater modeling software used by the USACE. Seminar participants expressed strong interest in receiving training for the software with an eye toward future collaborative water management projects, including implementation of Brazil's national water resource management plan.

¶15. (SBU) Talbot met with Brazilian groundwater modeling experts and presented his experience and in depth knowledge of the capabilities and application of the Department of Defense Groundwater Modeling System (GMS) software during the seminar hosted by ANA. The seminar was well-received and attended by upwards of 25 GOB officials from ANA, the Ministry of Environment (MMA), and from MRE.

¶16. (U) Seminar discussions identified several areas for potential future collaboration with USACE, including: 1) groundwater modeling; 2) hydrologic modeling; and 3) reservoir operations and multiple use applications. Participants said that they would benefit from training on the GMS software and thought that it would be useful in the implementation of Brazil's national water resources management plan. (NOTE: Talbot explained that so long as USACE and the GOB are working collaboratively on a specific project, the GOB should be use the software without any proprietary limitations. END NOTE).

¶17. (SBU) In addition to participation in the seminar, Talbot also reached out to state level water experts and enrolled the assistance of SOUTHCOP to support future collaboration between USACE and the GOB. During a meeting at the embassy's Military Liaison Office, COL Mitch Butikofer pointed out that Talbot's visit reinforced the visit the week before by USACE Chief Van Antwerp (SEPTEL) and that

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SOUTHCOP may be able to provide financial assistance to support the Corps' interest in technical level cooperation and exchange. Talbot also met with Diaogenes Mortari, the Superintendent of Grants of the Federal District of Brazil Water Authority (ADASA) and two of his staff to discuss groundwater modeling. (NOTE: Under current Brazilian law, groundwater resources are within the jurisdiction of the individual states of which the Federal District is in similar fashion to the District of Columbia in the United States. Even so, individual states follow the lead of ANA with regard to the approach and tools used in groundwater projects. END NOTE). Mortari expressed interest in learning more about the use of GMS for their groundwater projects.

USGS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

¶18. (U) The July video conference also identified water quality and sediment monitoring as a priority area for technical cooperation. To this end, OES sent U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) hydrologist Arthur Horowitz to Rio de Janeiro October 15-19 to present a seminar on water quality and sediment monitoring to state and local authorities. The seminar was hosted by the Brazilian Geological Survey, known as CPRM (Companhia de Pesquisa de Recursos Mine - Mineral Research Company) and attended by government, university, and private sector (consultancy and power generation companies) representatives. Discussions included potential cooperation between CPRM and USGS in the areas of training and technical assistance.

¶19. (SBU) Horowitz suggested that the cooperative projects for technology transfer and exchange of experiences could be developed on a peer to peer basis between the individuals involved with these issues at both organizations. (NOTE: USGS' collaboration with Brazilian interlocutors is not new. USGS has been collaborating with the Institute of Hydraulic Research at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) since 2004. Moreover, USGS has also presented at two seminars hosted by UFRGS, one March 19-25 2006 and the other November 13-17, 2006. Both seminars also focused on water quality and sediment monitoring. END NOTE).

¶10. (SBU) CPRM representatives indicated that they are interested in collaboration with USGS in the following areas: 1) fluvial

sediment analysis; 2) water and sediment laboratory quality-assurance; 3) non-point source water pollution assessment; 4) design and planning the operation of monitoring networks; 5) use of equipment (ADCP, HADCP), techniques (remote sensing) and software applied to hydrologic measurements; 6) flood and drought forecasting; 7) modeling ground-water flow; 8) digital geographic data-base oriented to water resources assessment; and 9) research on physical processes controlling the distribution and quality of surface-water. CPRM is also interested in obtaining and using modernized sampling/measuring equipment.

NEXT STEPS

¶11. (SBU) ANA and MMA officials are interested in pursuing collaboration with USACE and to adopting USACE tools, standards and practices in groundwater modeling. Post understands that Talbot plans to recommend to USACE that formal collaboration be pursued with the ANA as part of USACE's mission and goals for international affairs. In addition, ANA, USACE and Post will jointly develop a post-exchange report identifying possible concrete next steps for formalizing the cooperation. At this point, it looks as though the first step of collaboration may be a technical training course in Brazil on the application of the GMS software to be administered by USACE (with possible MLO funding for travel/per diem costs).

¶12. (SBU) CPRM and USGS agreed that collaborative work could start immediately, after finding the corresponding researchers in the USGS in each area of mutual interest.

CPRM and USGS representatives also agreed that any future technical cooperation should be formalized under the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USGS and CPRM (1997). Post understands that USGS and CPRM will discuss this latter possibility with agency management and also seek out appropriate agency researchers. In the meantime, communication between USGS, CPRM and UFRGS will continue and Post stands ready to assist as necessary.

¶13. (SBU) Post will also continue to inform MRE on these collaborative efforts as they relate to our bilateral relations under the Common Agenda for the Environment.

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COMMENT

¶14. (SBU) This set of seminars brings to life the vision that the USG and GOB agreed to at the 2006 CAE of technical working groups developing priorities and planning for cooperation, with the State Department and the MRE stepping back and playing a supportive role. These visits successfully jump-started CAE technical level cooperation in the area of groundwater management. Post will now work with ANA, MMA, MRE, CPRM, OES and USG technical agencies (USACE, USGS and others) to further technical cooperation in this important area. Post sees good prospects for additional, focused technical assistance in the area of water resources management following these visits.

¶15. (SBU) Perhaps as important as identifying specific areas of technical level cooperation in groundwater modeling and water quality/sedimentation monitoring, however, was the positive recognition and support of the visits by MRE. In addition to sending two diplomats to attend the seminar, Coimbra sent a letter to the head of ANA's International Affairs Office, Raimundo Filho, in support of the collaboration. This blessing may bode well for future cooperation in this and other technical working group areas contemplated under the CAE.

¶16. (SBU) Post thanks OES and Embassy Budapest for creating this opportunity, and for the quick turnaround of funding and logistical aspects of the visits.

SOBEL